

ABC WORLD NEWS TONIGHT  
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PERSIAN GULF  
WAR

JENNINGS: The United Nations sent a team of four scientists to Tehran to investigate Iranian claims that Iraq has been using poison gas in the Persian Gulf War. Iraq says its troops have now driven back another Iranian defensive in the southern marshlands of Iraq. It is in that region where most Western analysts expect the fighting to get even more brutal if that is possible. Here's ABC's John McWethy.

MCWETHY: Separating more than 500,000 regular troops are vast swamplands, a natural barrier that Iraq has used as a protective shield, but U.S. satellite photography has revealed that Iran is feverishly working on ways to get across that marsh, building an enormous pontoon bridge that is already said to be an incredible 14 miles long. Farther south, Iran has nearly created an earthen causeway which is essentially a raised dirt road across the marshes. In addition, government sources say Iran has moved at least three hovercraft to the swamps, boats similar to this (Film clip) that could be used for quick flanking maneuvers. Intelligence sources say Iran has 250,000 regular troops on its side of the border supplemented by as many as 200,000 untrained volunteers, suicide troops, many of whom will go into battle unarmed. Iraq faces them with regular forces of nearly 300,000. When the fighting begins in earnest, many U.S. analysts expect Iraq to make extensive use of chemical weapons, of the mustard gases they have already employed but also the far more deadly nerve gases that U.S. intelligence sources say Iraq has been making and stockpiling for months. John McWethy, ABC News, the Pentagon.